Chapter 2

Souboutei Must be Destroyed

By Fujita Kazuhiro

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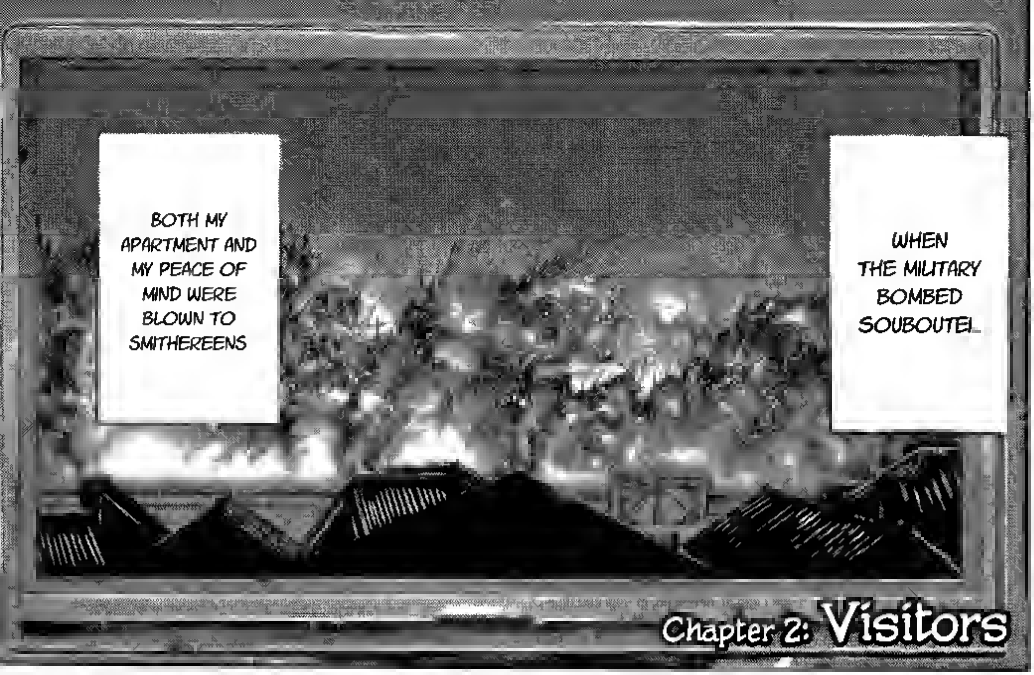

Chapter 2: Visitors

THE NEXT DAY, OUR COUNTRY'S LEADER, PRIME MINISTER SHIBA ATSUSHI, ISSUED THIS STATEMENT TO A RABID PRESS.

SOUBOUTEI STILL STANDS PROUD!!
EVEN AFTER THE FULL FORCE OF AN AIRSTRIKE,
Chapter 2: Visitors

EXPLAIN! EXPLAIN!!
WHAT IS THIS NONSENSE? JUST TAKE RESPON-SIBILITY FOR YOUR ACTIONS!
Y... YOU'RE JUST TRYING TO JUSTIFY BOMBING YOUR OWN COUN-TRY!

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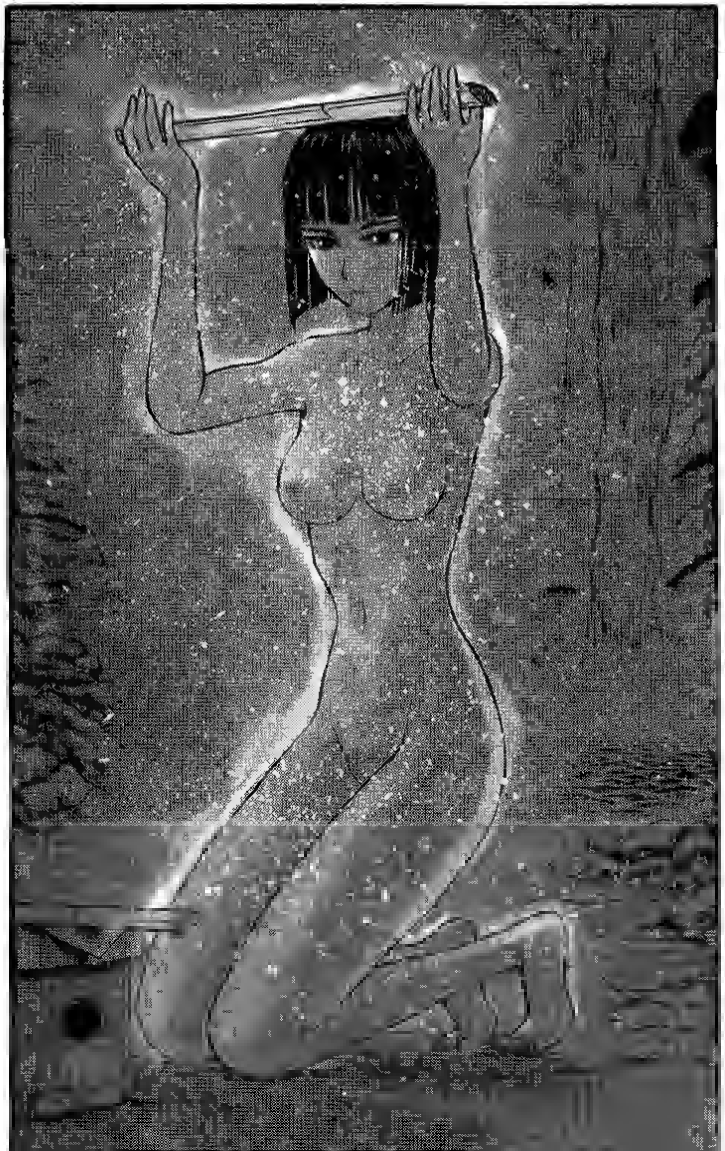
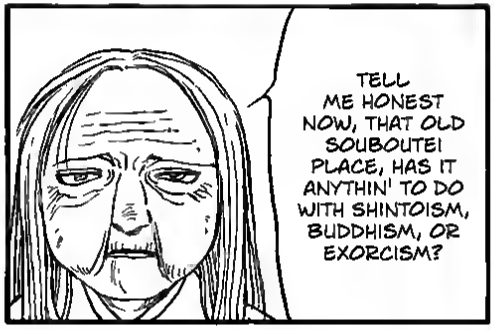


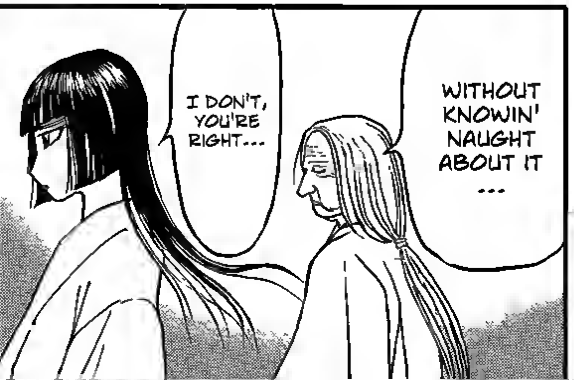
CLICK

YOU OFF NOW THEN, KURENAI?
KUJUU MOUNTAIN, OOITA PREFECTURE, KYUSHU, JAPAN


TELL ME HONEST NOW, THAT OLD SOUBOUTEI PLACE, HAS IT ANYTHIN' TO DO WITH SHINTOISM, BUDDHISM, OR EXORCISM?

YOU'RE TO JUST UP AN' GO THEN?

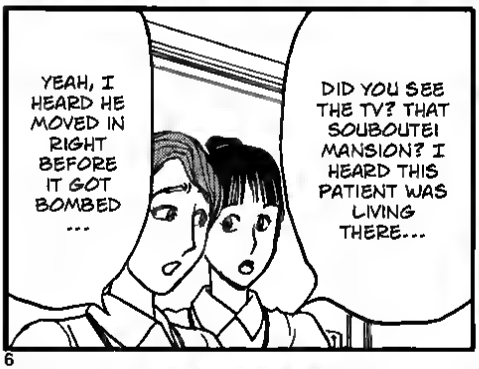
WELL, I WAS SURPRISED MYSELF GETTIN' A CALL FROM TOKYO OUTTA THE BLUE.

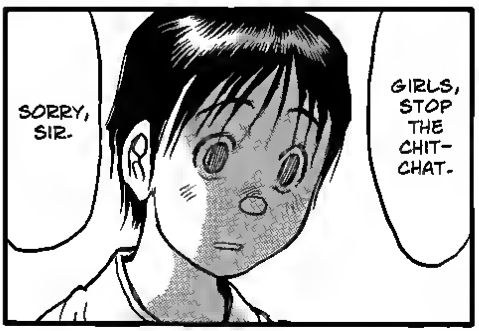

I DON'T, YOU'RE RIGHT...
WITHOUT KNOWIN' NAUGHT ABOUT IT ...

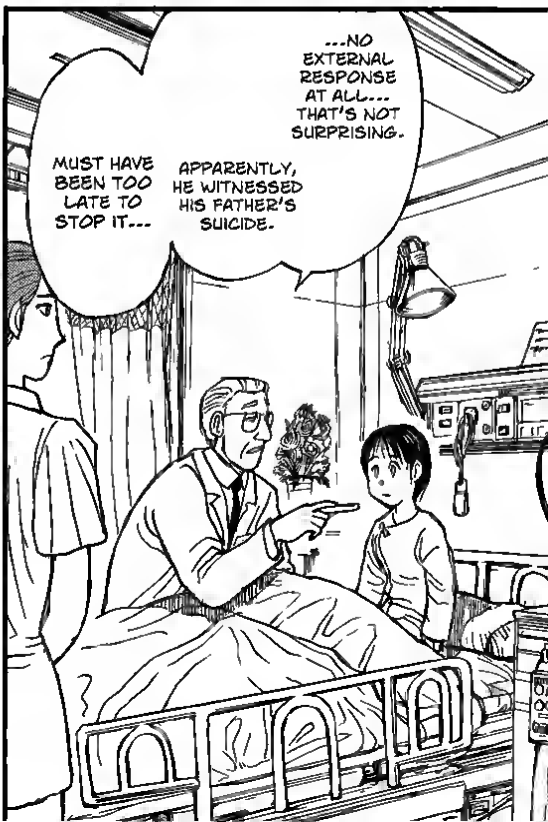
I AM, GRAM. I'LL BE BACK SOON ENOUGH, DON' WORRY YOURSELF.

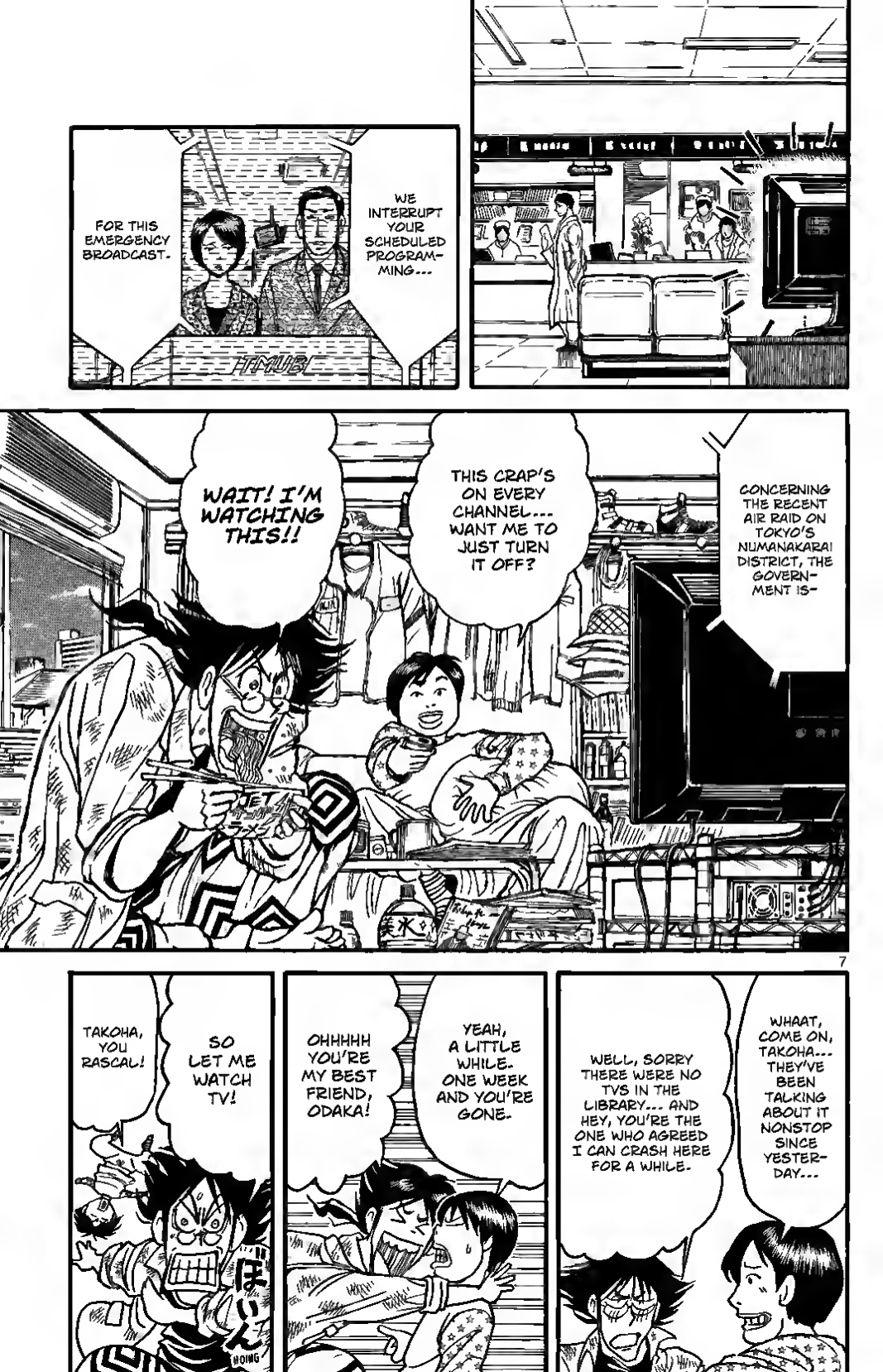
I COULD NEVER STAND BY AND DO NOTHIN'.
STILL, IF SOMETHIN' OUT THERE IS HURTIN' DAD AN' ROKUROU...

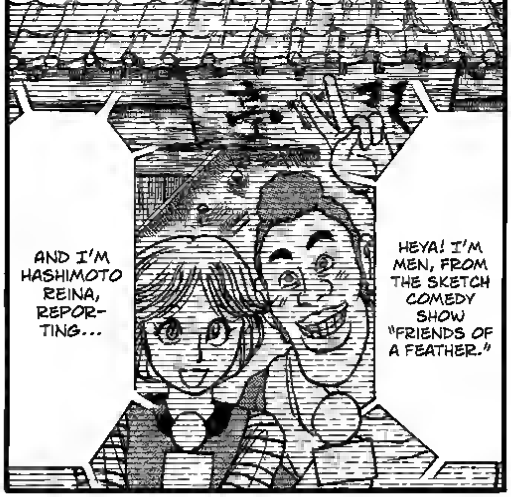
MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT
HIRYUU GENERAL HOSPITAL

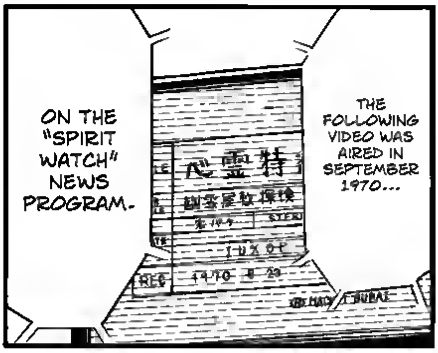

YEAH, I HEARD HE MOVED IN RIGHT BEFORE IT GOT BOMBED ...
DID YOU SEE THE TV? THAT SOUBOUTEI MANSION? I HEARD THIS PATIENT WAS LIVING THERE...


SORRY, SIR.
GIRLS, STOP THE CHIT-CHAT.

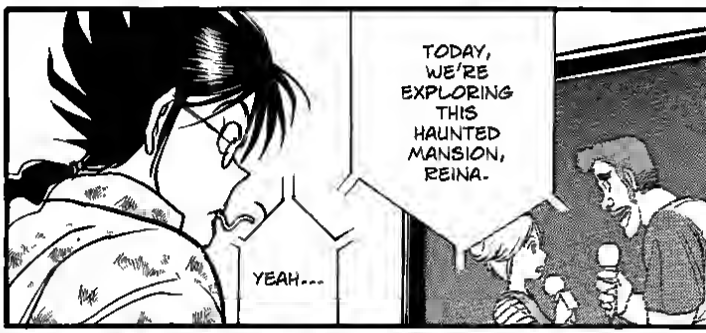

...NO EXTERNAL RESPONSE AT ALL... THAT'S NOT SURPRISING.
APPARENTLY, HE WITNESSED HIS FATHER'S SUICIDE.
MUST HAVE BEEN TOO LATE TO STOP IT...

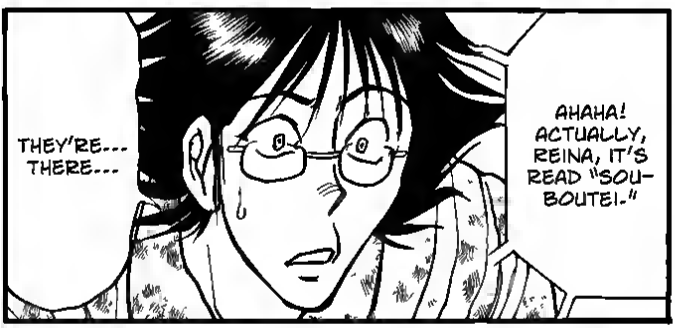

WE INTERRUPT YOUR SCHEDULED PROGRAMMING...
FOR THIS EMERGENCY BROADCAST.
CONCERNING THE RECENT AIR RAID ON TOKYO'S NUMANAKARA DISTRICT, THE GOVERNMENT IS-
THIS CRAP'S ON EVERY CHANNEL... WANT ME TO JUST TURN IT OFF?
WAIT! I'M WATCHING THIS!!
WHAAT, COME ON, TAKOHA... THEY'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT IT NONSTOP SINCE YESTERDAY...
WELL, SORRY THERE WERE NO TVS IN THE LIBRARY... AND HEY, YOU'RE THE ONE WHO AGREED I CAN CRASH HERE FOR A WHILE.
YEAH, A LITTLE WHILE. ONE WEEK AND YOU'RE GONE.
OHHHHH YOU'RE MY BEST FRIEND, ODAKA!
SO LET ME WATCH TV!
TAKOHA, YOU RASCAL!


AND I'M HASHIMOTO REINA, REPORTING...
HEYA! I'M MEN, FROM THE SKETCH COMEDY SHOW "FRIENDS OF A FEATHER."

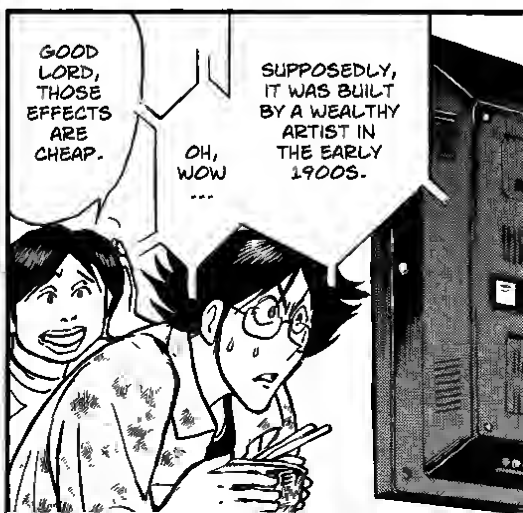

ON THE "SPIRIT WATCH" NEWS PROGRAM.
THE FOLLOWING VIDEO WAS AIRED IN SEPTEMBER 1970...

TEIBOU-
...SOU?

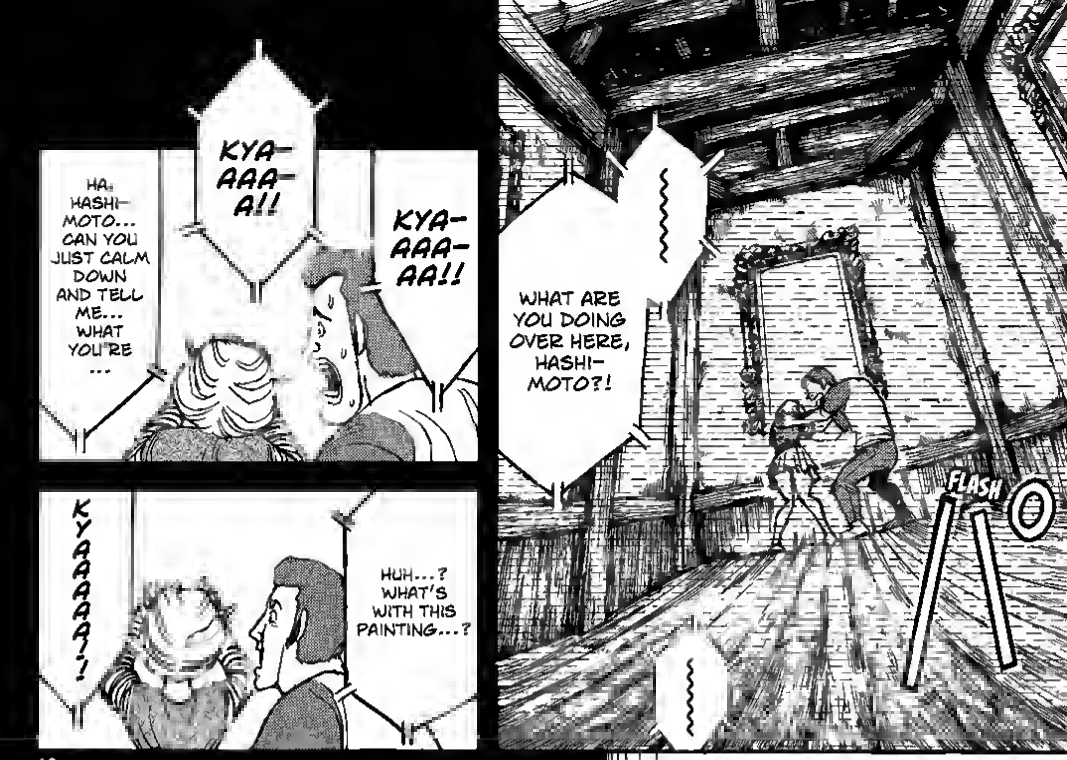

TODAY, WE'RE EXPLORING THIS HAUNTED MANSION, REINA.
YEAH...


THEY'RE... THERE...
AHAHA! ACTUALLY, REINA, IT'S READ "SOU-BOUTEI."

DOKU
WOOA-AH, IT'S HUGE...
LET'S GO IN.


GOOD LORD, THOSE EFFECTS ARE CHEAP.
OH, WOW ...
SUPPOSEDLY, IT WAS BUILT BY A WEALTHY ARTIST IN THE EARLY 1900S.

WOAH, WEIRD ENTRANCE HALL, HUH...
WHAT THE HECK, MEN? THIS IS WAY TOO CREEPYYY...
IT REALLY IS... HEH, IT'S TOTALLY GOT THAT RECLUSIVE ARTIST VIBE, DOESN'T IT, REINA?
...REINA...? AHAHA, SCARED SPEECHLESS?
I DON'T LIKE THIS PLACE... LET'S LEAVE...
REINA, SAY SOMETHING YOU'RE CREEPING ME OUT...
.....
9
I DON'T LIKE THIS PLACE... LET'S LEAVE...
WAIT, REI- ER, HASHIMOTO, YOU'RE THE REPORTER- WE NEED TO FINISH THE PROGRAM...
.....
I... SAW SOMEBODY...
PSSHH!
PSSHH!
HUH? HASHIMOTO, WHERE'D YOU GO?
HEY, CAMERAMAN... THIS IS REAL BAD... WHAT SHOULD WE DO, AODA...?


KYA-AAAA-A!!
KYA-AAAA-AA!!
HA, HASHI-MOTO... CAN YOU JUST CALM DOWN AND TELL ME... WHAT YOU'RE ...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING OVER HERE, HASHI-MOTO?!
FLASH
KYAAAAAA!!
HUH...? WHAT'S WITH THIS PAINTING...?

SHIP
SHIP
SHIP
SHIP
IN... INSIDE THE PAINT-ING...
THERE'S SOMETHING COMING.... AAAAH...
...PAINT-ING...
THAT'S... JUST A PAINTING... RIGHT?

GYAAAAAAAAAAAA
BYOOM
SEE? TOLD YOU SO, TAKOHA-

ROKUROU...
WAS THAT ...?
WHAT...
SEE SOMETHING LIKE THAT IN THERE?
DID YOU REALLY...
HUH?
HE... LISTENED...
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HE TOOK WHAT I SAID... SERIOUSLY...
I'D BE TEMPTED TO GO EXPLORING ANYWAY.
HEHEHEH! WELL, IF I WERE YOU...
TODAY, WE'RE EXPLORING THIS HAUNTED MANSION...
AH ...!

I LIKE KITTIES...
ﾊﾟﾗ...

I'LL DRAW THAT ART PROF-ESSOR MATSUI YOU USED TO HAVE A CRUSH ON...
I'LL DO HER AS A BUNNY GIRL... AND SUUUPER REALISTIC, TOO...

Yes
Yes
No. I'm not family...

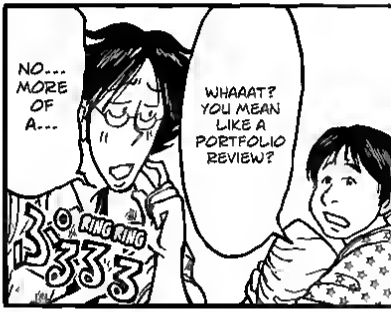
HEY ODAKA, I'M GONNA NEED YOUR SCOOTER AND SOME CASH.
NAH, BRO.

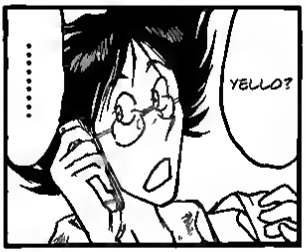
WHAAT? TAKOHA, WHO'RE YOU CALLING?
ﾋﾟｯﾋﾟ

I'M GOING TO SHOW MY PICTURE TO SOME-ONE---
WELL.... ACT-UALLY,

SO WHERE YOU GOIN'?
VISIT-ING A...

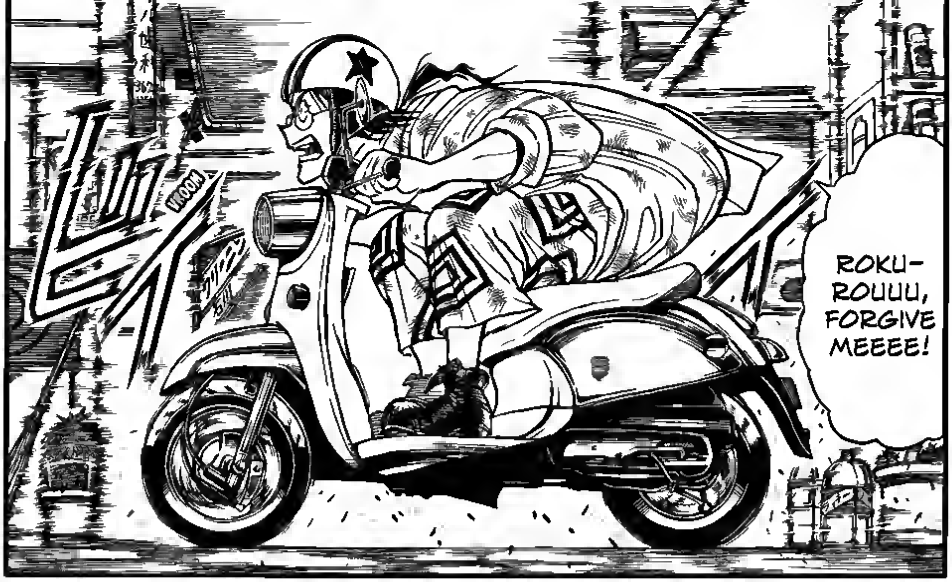
THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT! I'M NOT DOING THAT!!

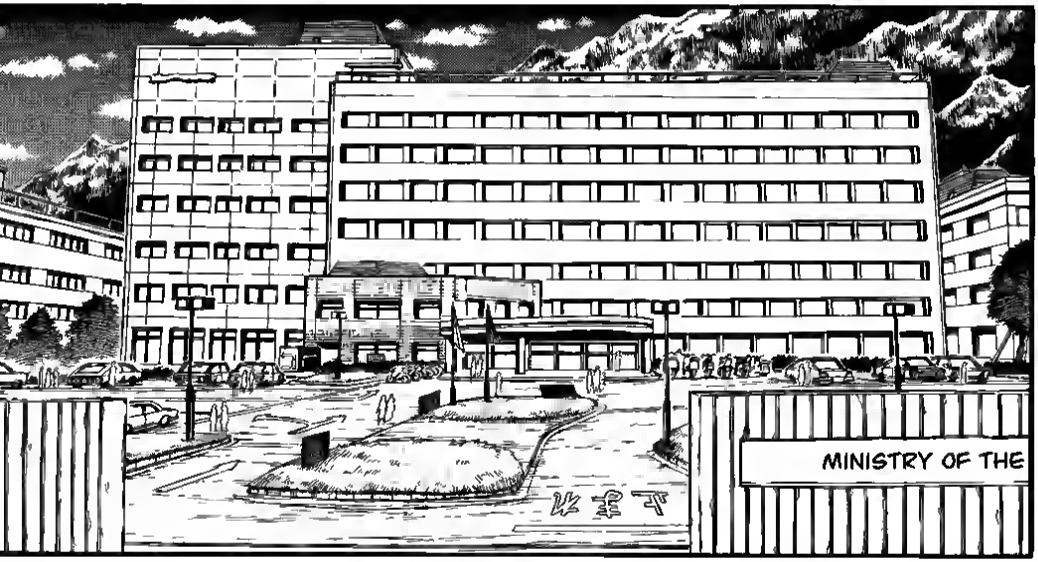

WHAAAT? YOU MEAN LIKE A PORTFOLIO REVIEW?
NO... MORE OF A...
RING RING


YELLO?
.....

DON'T FORGET YOUR PROMISE!
THAT'S SO NOT ON MY MIND RIGHT NOW!

DUDE, WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?
THEY WANTED ME TO COME GET SOME MISSING PERSON THEY FOUND FROM 45 YEARS AGO.
MUST HAVE MISDIALED.

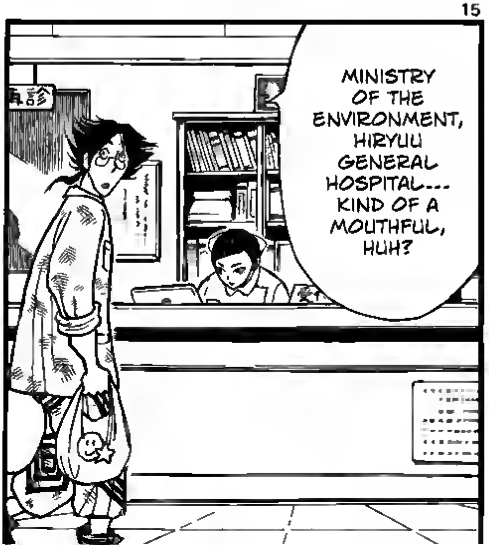

ROKU-ROUUU, FORGIVE MEEEE!

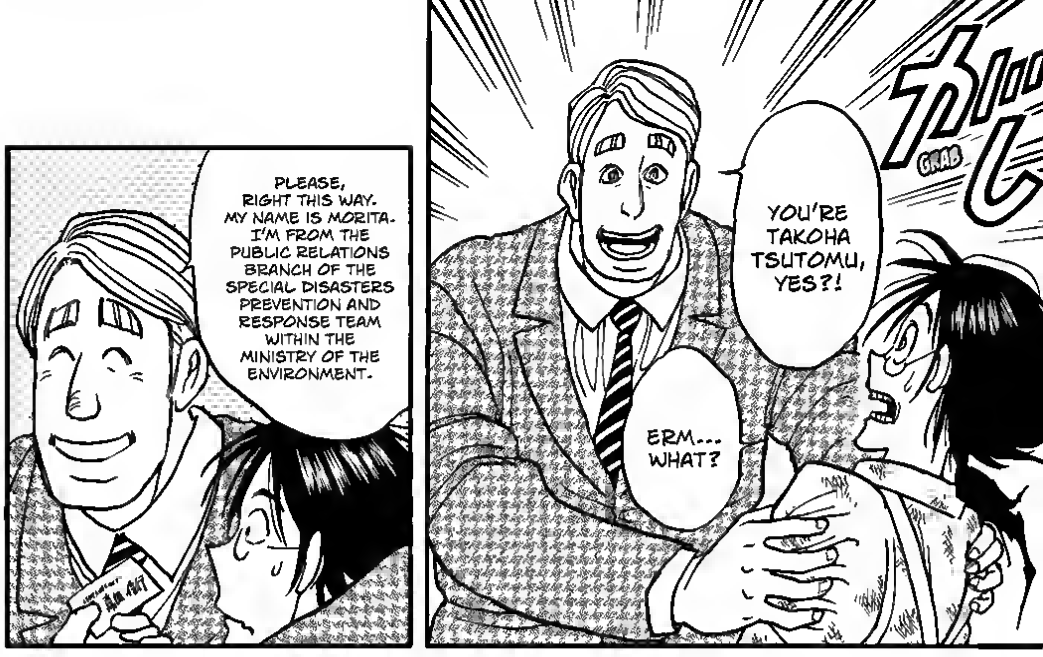

MINISTRY OF THE

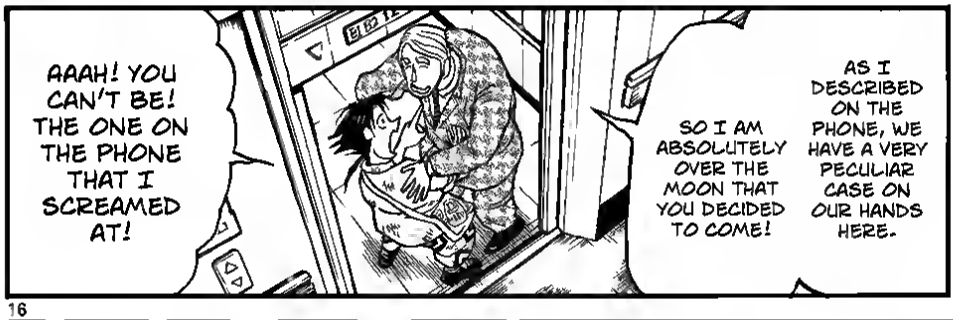
15

THERE YOU ARE! I'M SO GLAD YOU COULD MAKE IT!

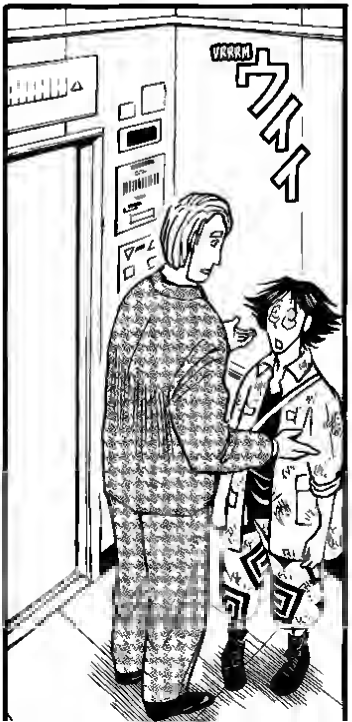
'SCUSE ME, MA'AM, I'M HERE TO SEE A KID NAMED TACHIKI ROKUROU---
カッ CLICK
カッ CLICK

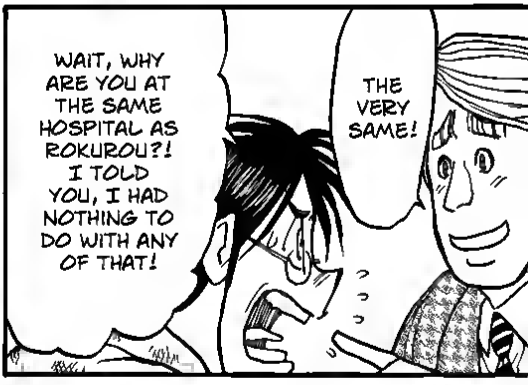

MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT, HIRYUU GENERAL HOSPITAL--- KIND OF A MOUTHFUL, HUH?

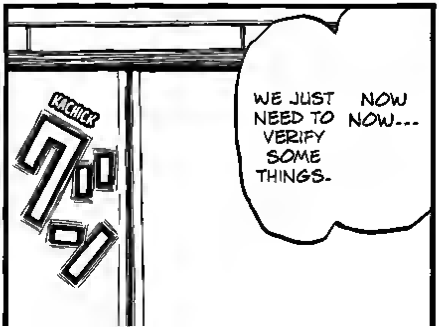

PLEASE, RIGHT THIS WAY. MY NAME IS MORITA. I'M FROM THE PUBLIC RELATIONS BRANCH OF THE SPECIAL DISASTERS PREVENTION AND RESPONSE TEAM WITHIN THE MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT.
GRAB
YOU'RE TAKOHA TSUTOMU, YES?!
ERM... WHAT?


AAAH! YOU CAN'T BE! THE ONE ON THE PHONE THAT I SCREAMED AT!
SO I AM ABSOLUTELY OVER THE MOON THAT YOU DECIDED TO COME!
AS I DESCRIBED ON THE PHONE, WE HAVE A VERY PECULIAR CASE ON OUR HANDS HERE.

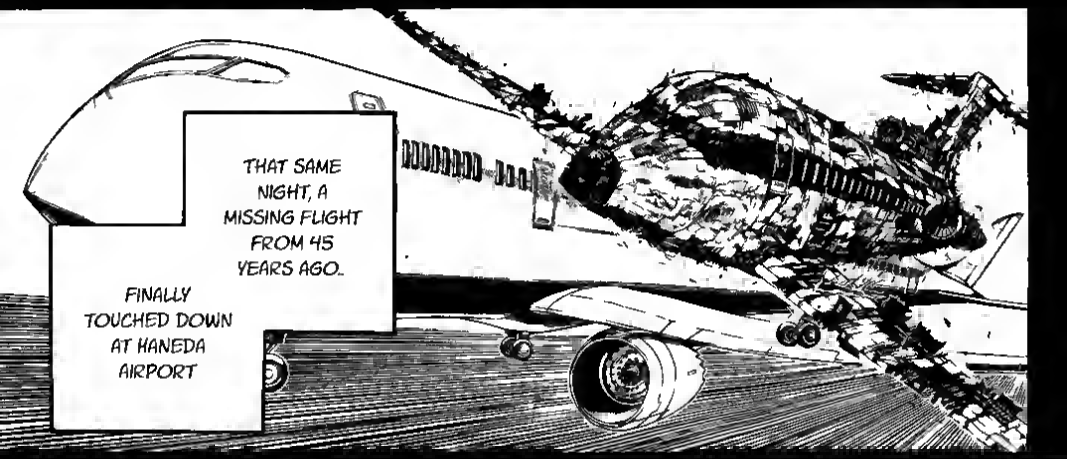
I WAS NOT PREPARED FOR WHAT HE TOLD ME... IT WAS UNREAL.

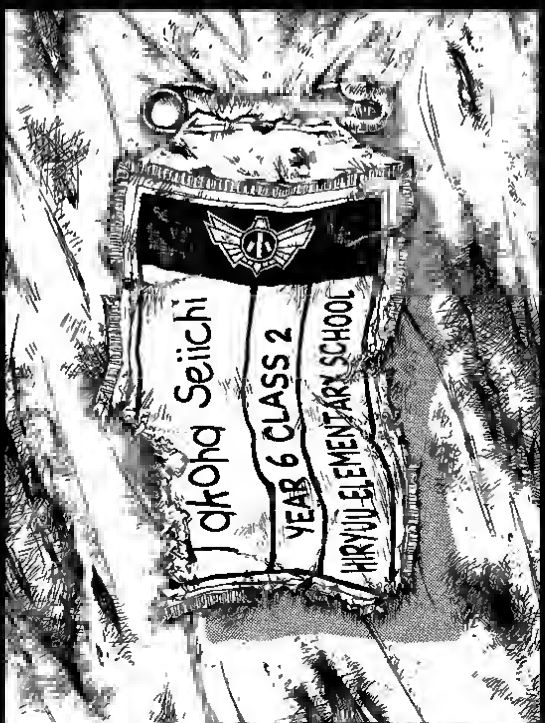

VARRM
ウィィ


WAIT, WHY ARE YOU AT THE SAME HOSPITAL AS ROKUROU?! I TOLD YOU, I HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH ANY OF THAT!
THE VERY SAME!

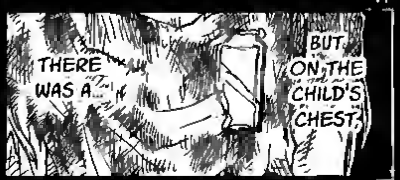

KACHICK
ウィ
WE JUST NEED TO VERIFY SOME THINGS.
NOW NOW...

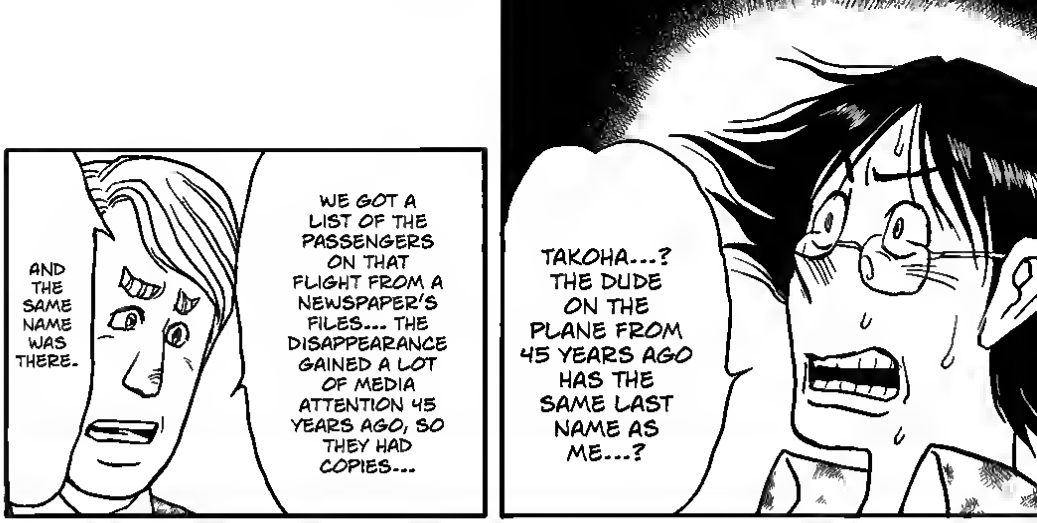
TOKYO AIR RAID!!!
THE END OF A GENERATION!
CIVILIAN HOMES DESTROYED IN EXPLOSION!
BUT THERE WAS ANOTHER BIZARRE INCIDENT ON THAT NIGHT, HIDDEN FROM THE PRESS.
NEWS OF THE SOUBOUTEI BOMBING MADE HEADLINES AROUND THE WORLD.


THAT SAME NIGHT, A MISSING FLIGHT FROM 45 YEARS AGO...
FINALLY TOUCHED DOWN AT HANEDA AIRPORT

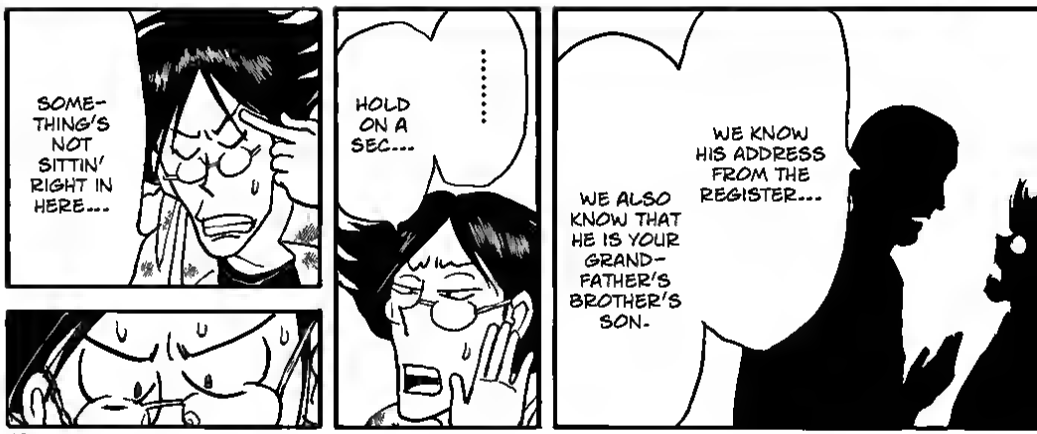

Takoha Seiichi
YEAR 6 CLASS 2
HIRYUU ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

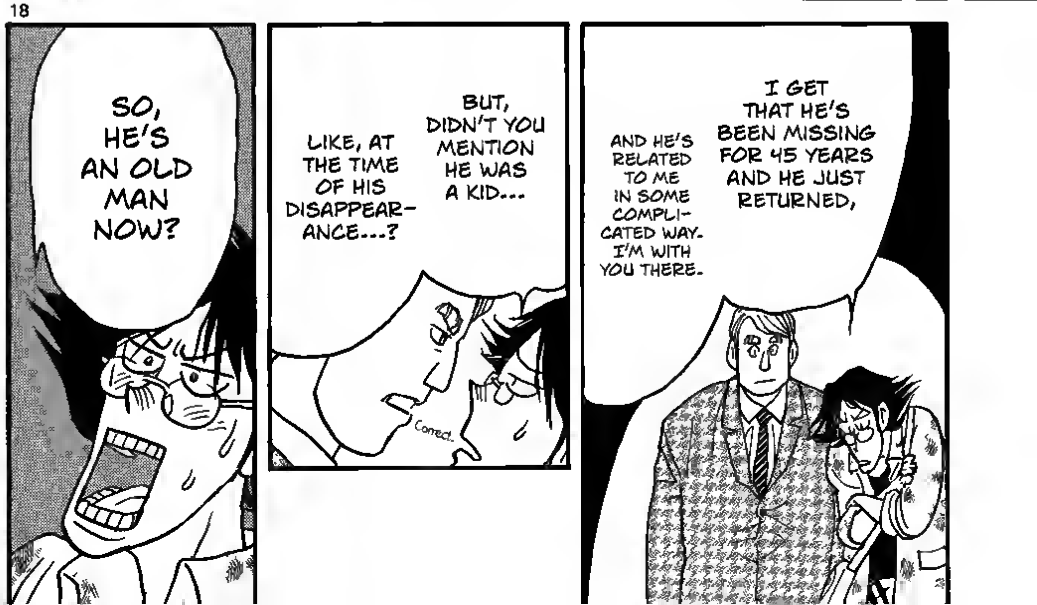
ALL THEY FOUND INSIDE THAT BROKEN DOWN AIRCRAFT, WHICH SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO FLY AT ALL...
WAS A SINGLE CHILD. ANYTHING ELSE REMAINS CONFIDENTIAL TO THIS DAY...


BUT ON THE CHILD'S CHEST,
THERE WAS A...



TAKOHA SEIICHI (12)

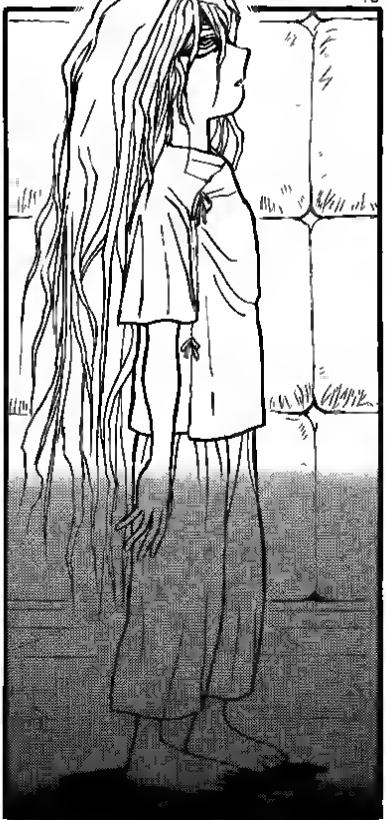




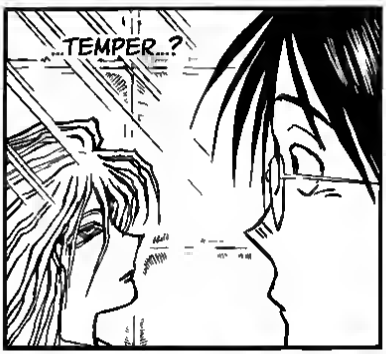
SHOOP
HMM... YOU MIGHT THINK THAT, WOULDN'T YOU.

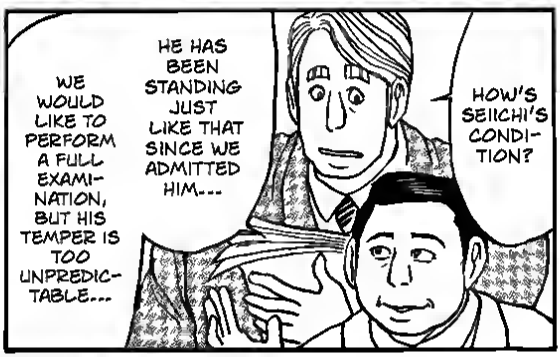
19

OH... HELLO.
EVERY-BODY, THIS IS A RELA-TIVE OF SEIICHI'S.
NICE TO MEET YOU.

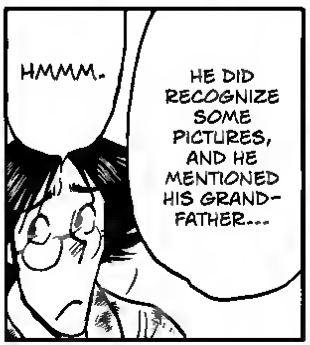


I GUESS THIS IS A ONE WAY MIRROR?
THAT'S RIGHT, AND SOUND-PROOF TO BOOT.


...TEMPER...?

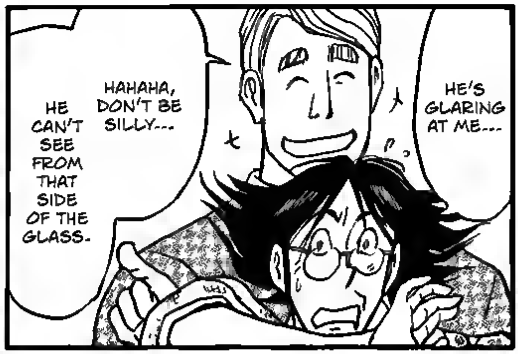

HOW'S SEIICHI'S CONDI-TION?
HE HAS BEEN STANDING JUST LIKE THAT SINCE WE ADMITTED HIM...
WE WOULD LIKE TO PERFORM A FULL EXAMI-NATION, BUT HIS TEMPER IS TOO UNPREDIC-TABLE...

DOES HE REMEM-BER ANY-THING?
IT WOULD MAKE SENSE IF HE DOESN'T... I MEAN, GOSH, 45 YEARS.

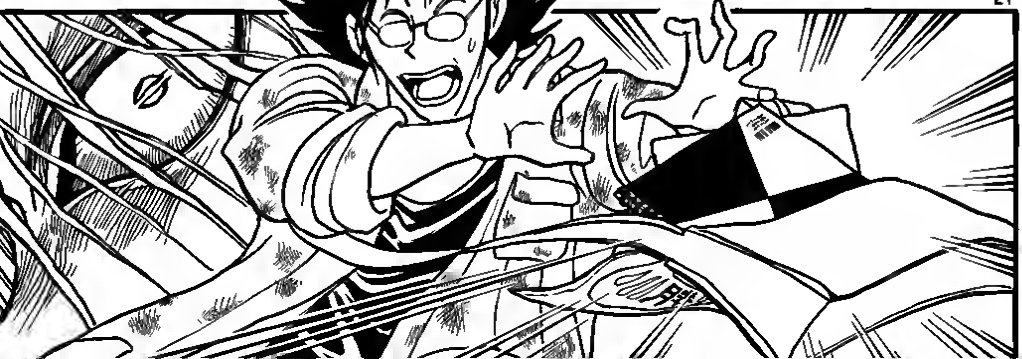

HE DID RECOGNIZE SOME PICTURES, AND HE MENTIONED HIS GRAND-FATHER...
HMMM.

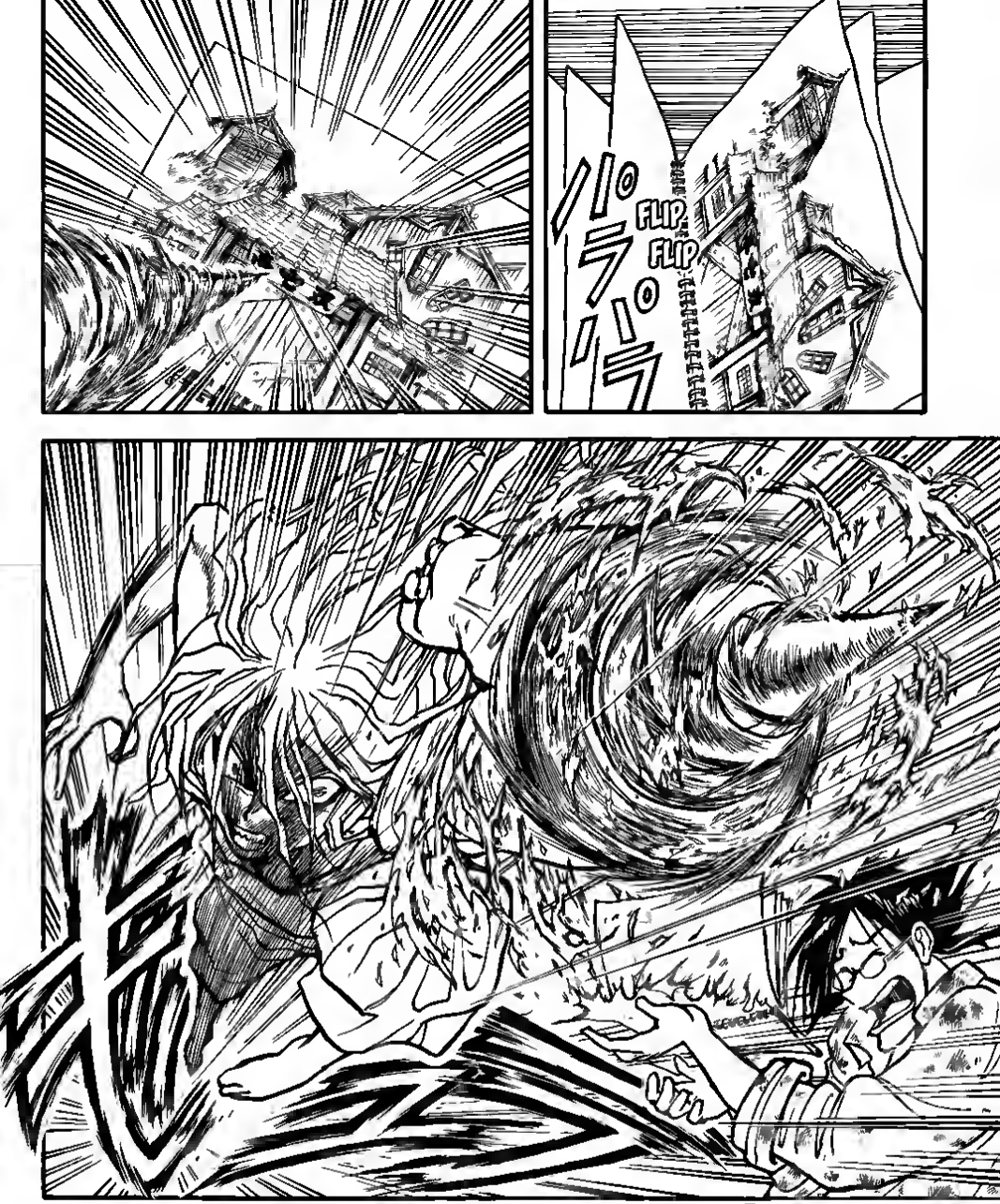
THIS NORMAL KID WITH THE TENDER EXPRESSION...?

GLARE


HE'S GLARING AT ME---
HAHAHA, DON'T BE SILLY---
HE CAN'T SEE FROM THAT SIDE OF THE GLASS.

SHATTER



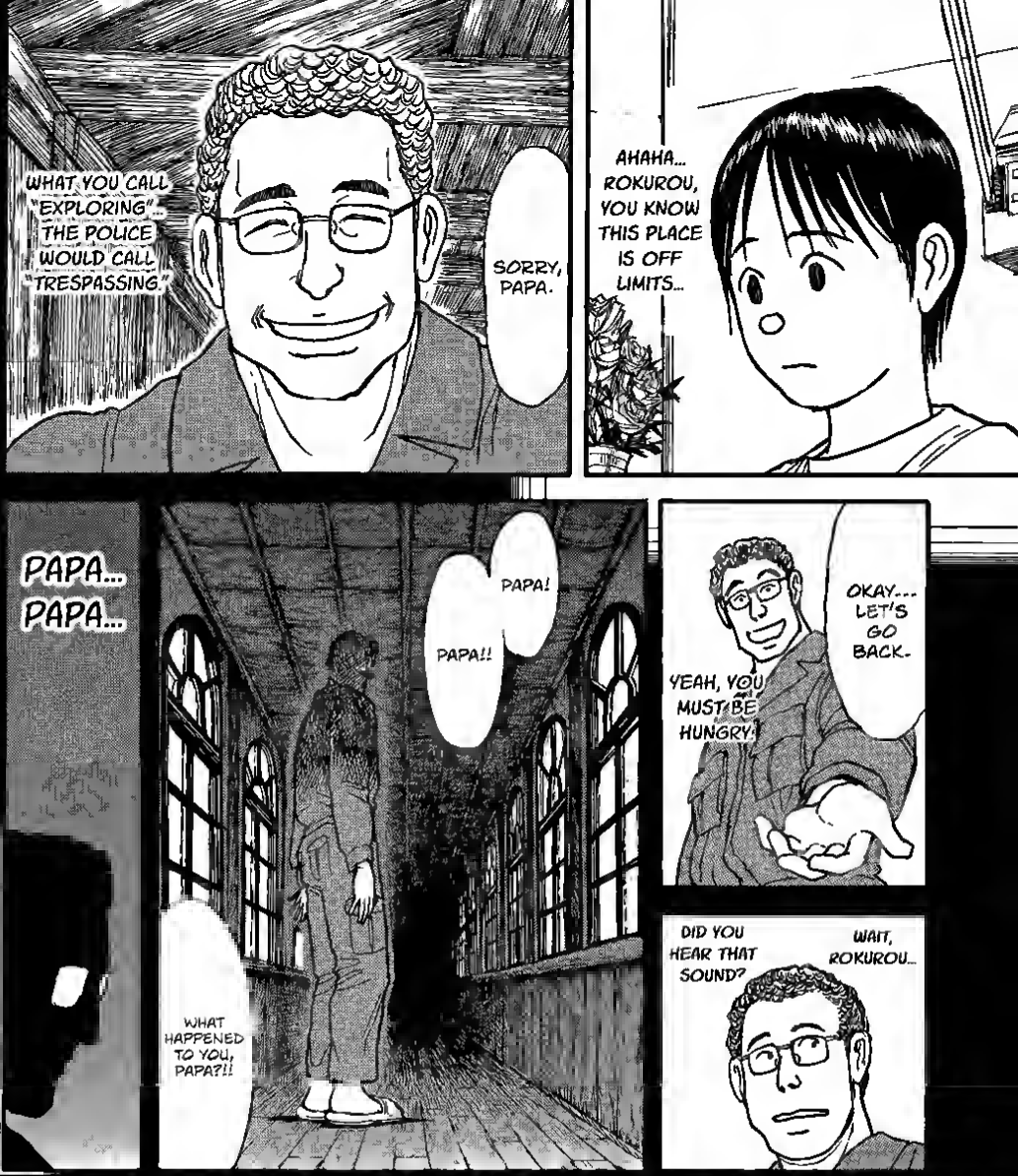

パラパラ
FLIP
FLIP

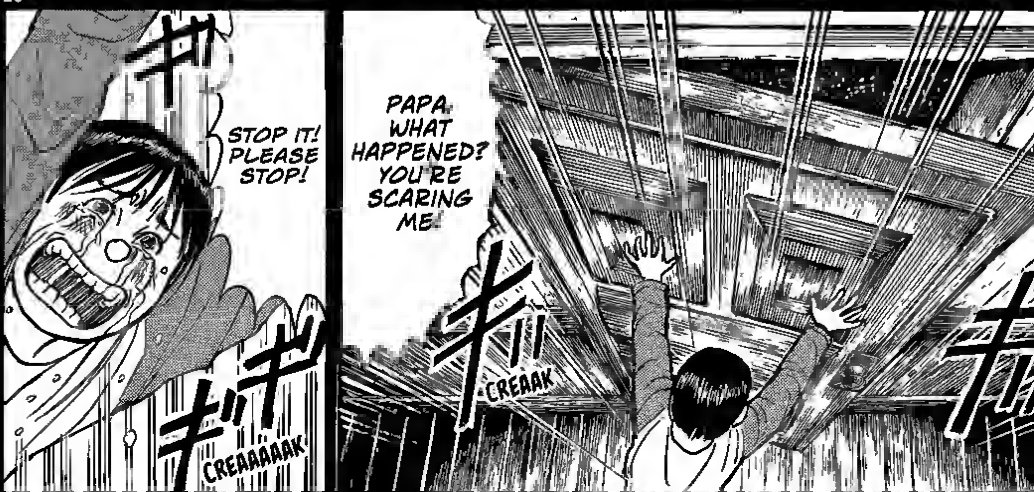
WHY ARE YOU MAD AT ME?!
EEEK!
SHWUP
SHWUP

I'M JUST AN ARTIIIIIST!
WHYYYYY?!
GRAA
SHWUP
23

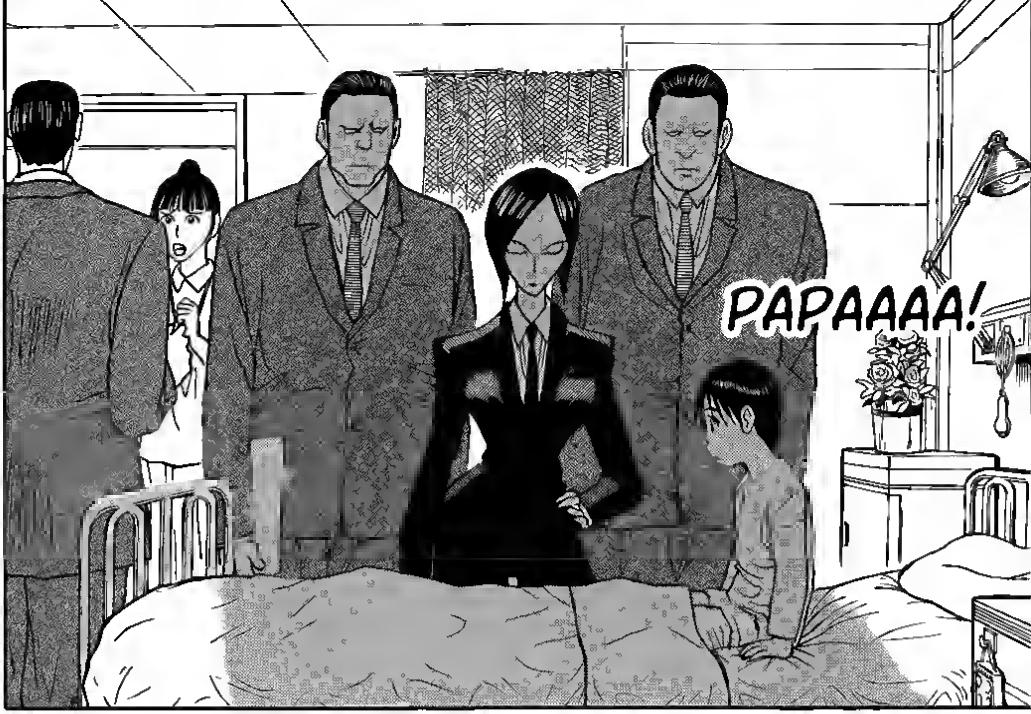
LOVE CATS... DO YOU...?
S... SO YOU HATE SOU-SOUTEI, AND...
---CAT---
---C,
I APOLO-GIZE FOR WASTING YOUR TIME...
CAT...
CAT...
TAKOHA, ARE YOU INJURED?!
WELL, I SHOULD GET GOING, THEN.
.....
WE MANAGED TO ADMINISTER A SEDATIVE AND SECURE HIM.
HOW'S HE DOING NOW?
TO BE HONEST, ONCE YOU FIND SOMEONE WHOSE HANDS TURN INTO DRILLS,
I THINK YOU'VE GOT YOUR MAN...
BYE.
AS YOU WERE.
YES, WE WILL LOOK INTO THAT...

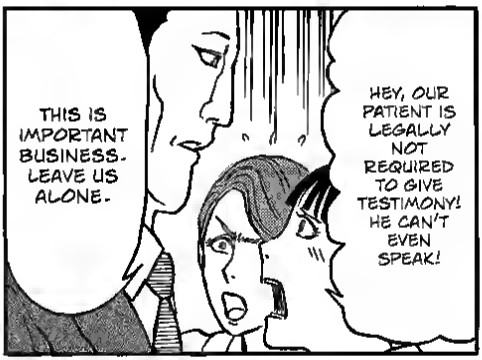
1
ピッ
PSSH
ピッ
PSSH
BOUTEI
SOU
LOVE CATS, DO YOU..?
YOU HATE SOUBOUTEI, AND..
KRIK
BOUTEI
SOU
KRIK
KWIRRL
25
SOUBOUTEI...
DESTROY...

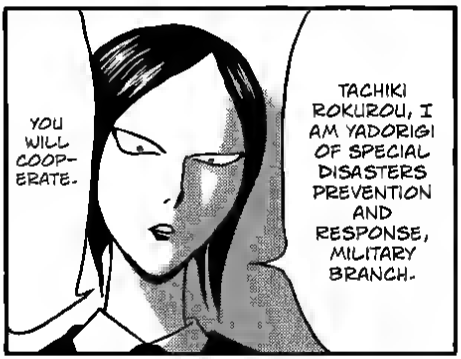

WHAT YOU CALL "EXPLORING"... THE POLICE WOULD CALL "TRESPASSING."
SORRY, PAPA.
AHAHA... ROKUROU, YOU KNOW THIS PLACE IS OFF LIMITS...
PAPA... PAPA...
PAPA!
PAPA!!
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU, PAPA?!!
OKAY... LET'S GO BACK.
YEAH, YOU MUST BE HUNGRY.
DID YOU HEAR THAT SOUND?
WAIT, ROKUROU...

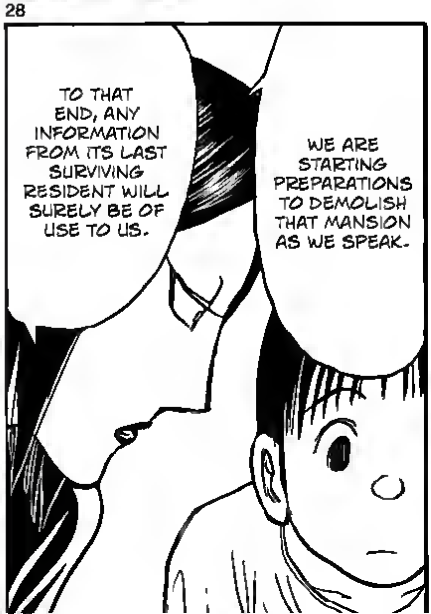

STOP IT! PLEASE STOP!
ギッ CREAAAAAK
PAPA, WHAT HAPPENED? YOU'RE SCARING ME.
キ CREAAK

CREAAAAK
ROKU... ROU...
L... LISTEN.. TO ME...
THIS... HOUSE... IS EVIL...
YOU... HAVE TO...
DES... TROY...
IT...


PAPAAAA!

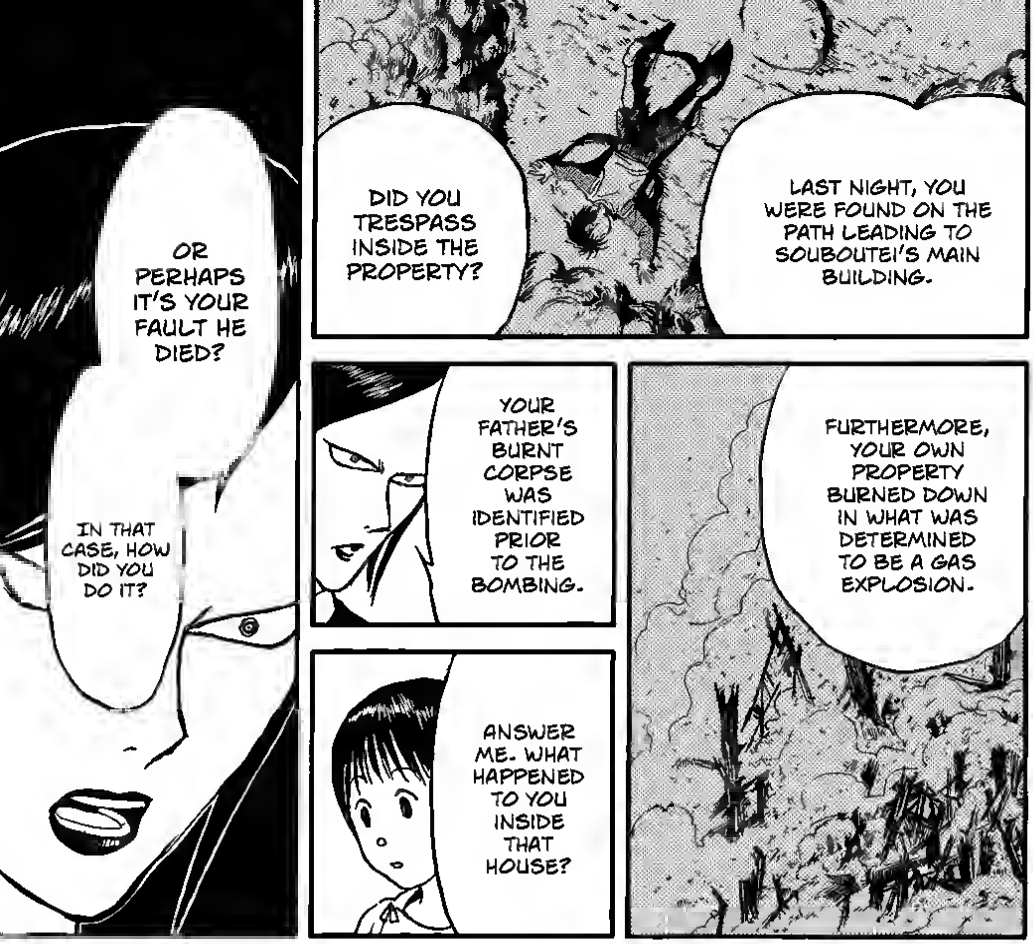

THIS IS IMPORTANT BUSINESS. LEAVE US ALONE.
HEY, OUR PATIENT IS LEGALLY NOT REQUIRED TO GIVE TESTIMONY! HE CAN'T EVEN SPEAK!

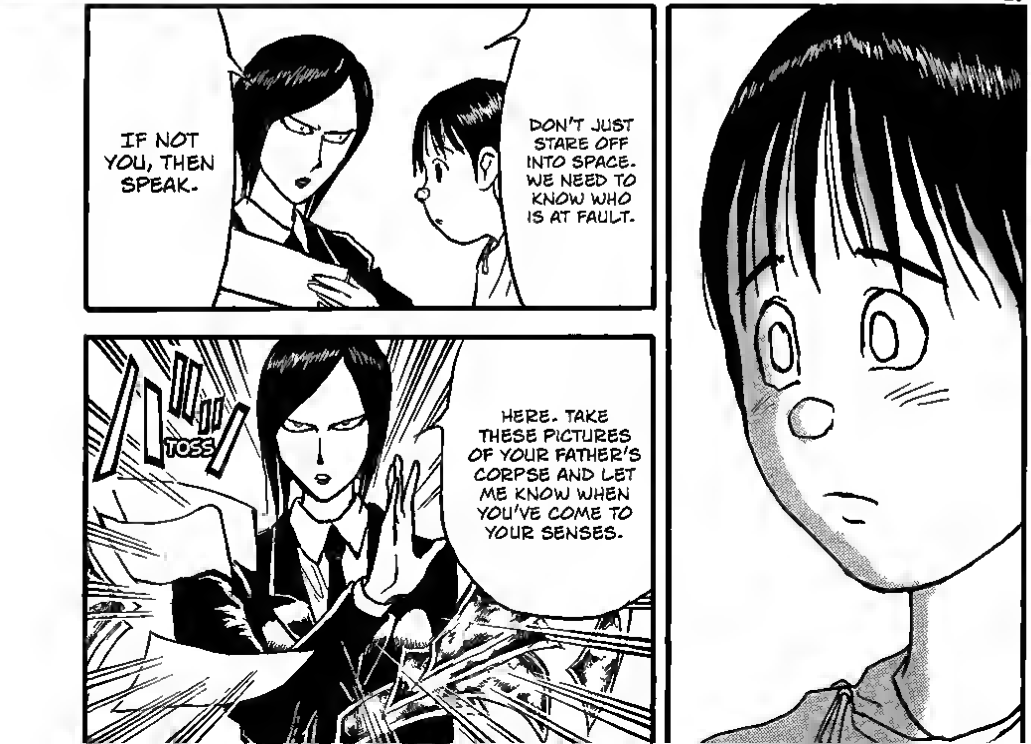

YOU WILL COOP-ERATE.
TACHIKI ROKUROU, I AM YADORIGI OF SPECIAL DISASTERS PREVENTION AND RESPONSE, MILITARY BRANCH.

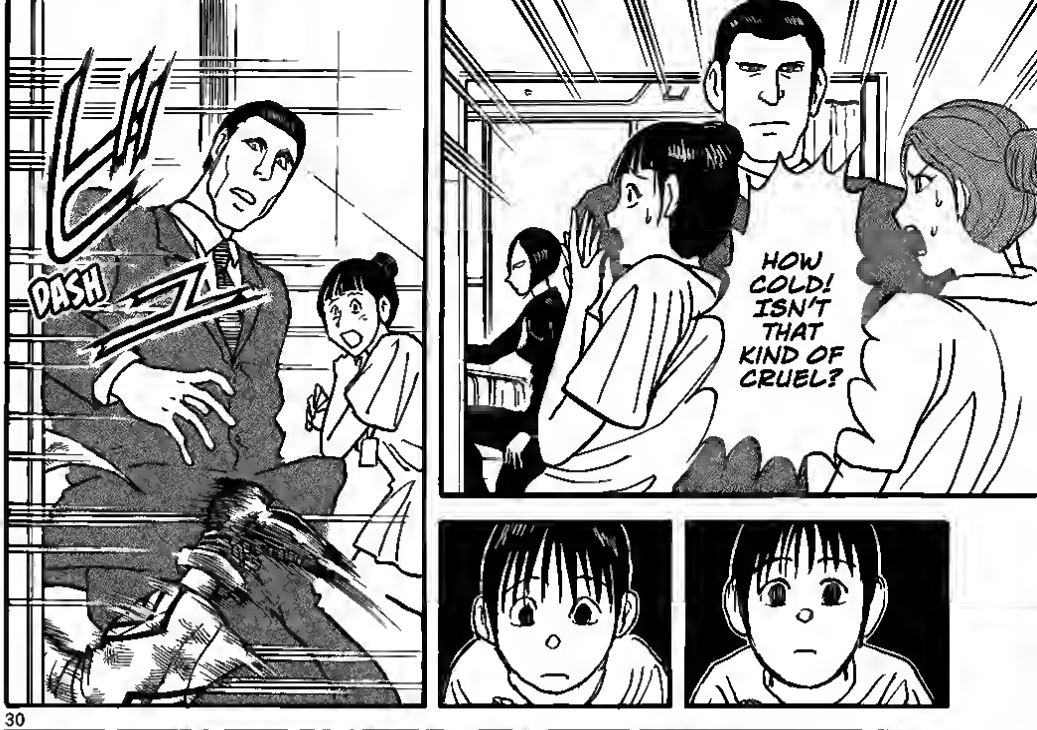

TO THAT END, ANY INFORMATION FROM ITS LAST SURVIVING RESIDENT WILL SURELY BE OF USE TO US.
WE ARE STARTING PREPARATIONS TO DEMOLISH THAT MANSION AS WE SPEAK.

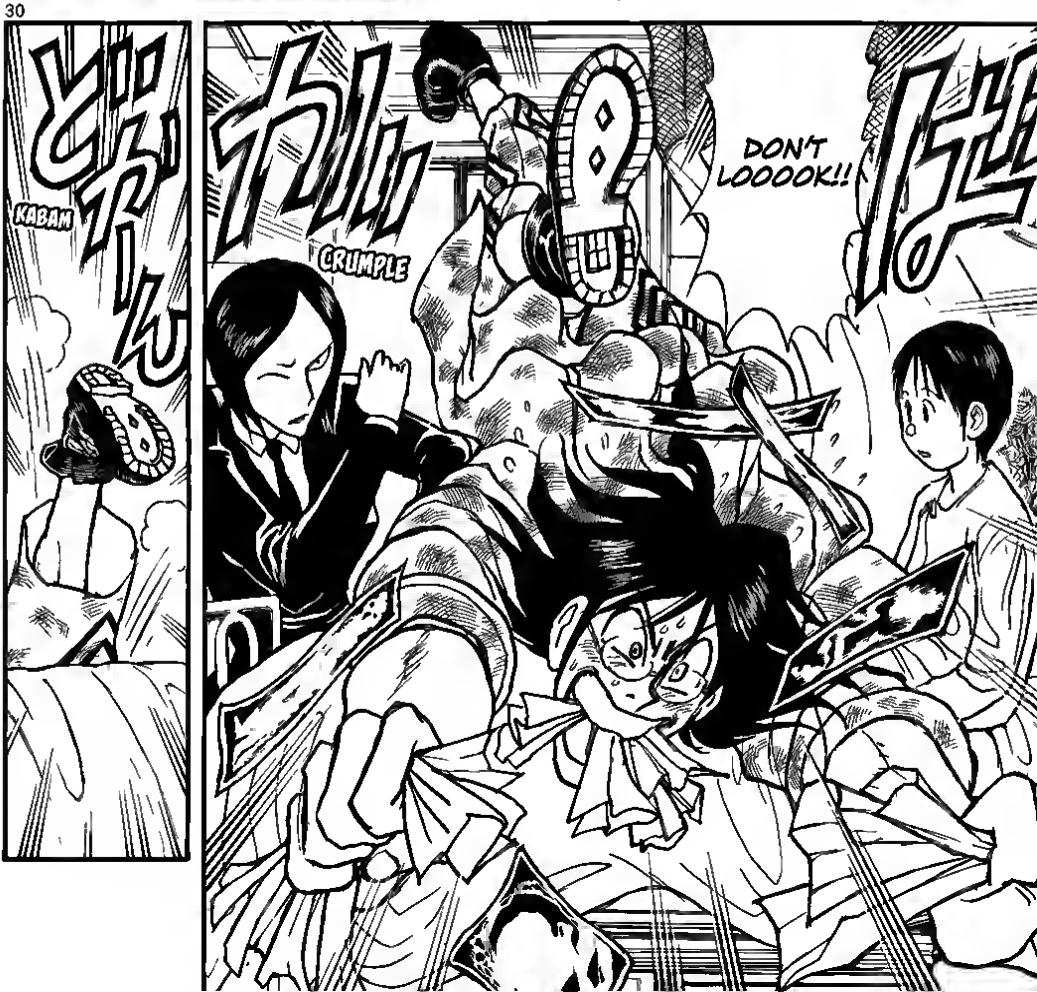
CAN'T FIND ANYTHING IN THIS PLACE...
HEEEY, ROKU-ROOOU!

WHAT DID YOU WITNESS IN SOUBOUTEI?

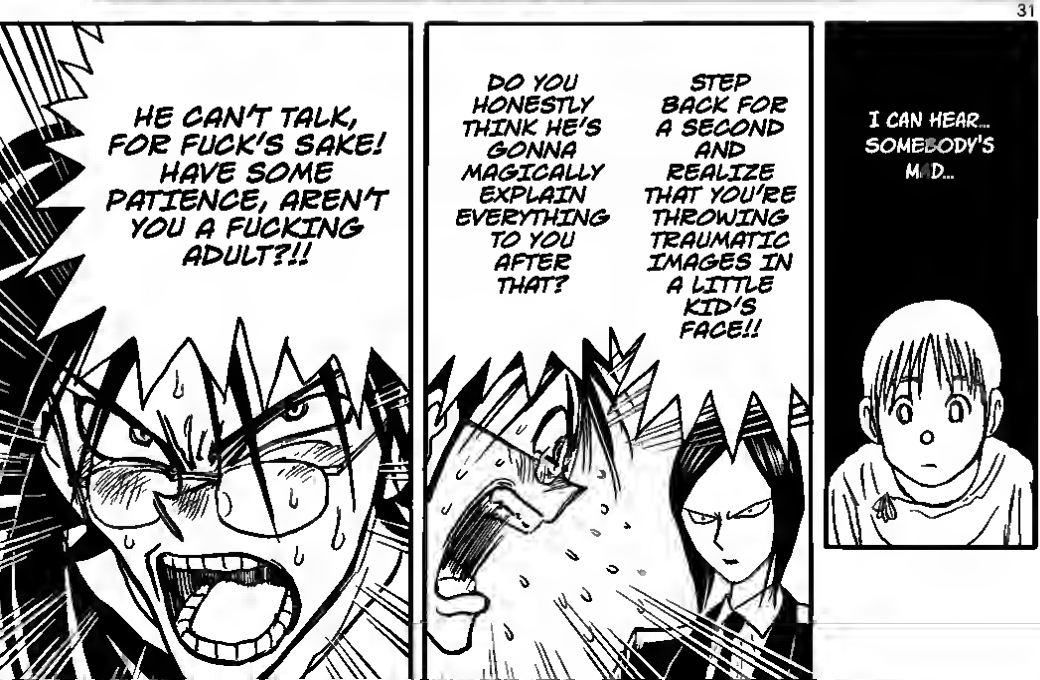

LAST NIGHT, YOU WERE FOUND ON THE PATH LEADING TO SOUBOUTEI'S MAIN BUILDING.
DID YOU TRESPASS INSIDE THE PROPERTY?
FURTHERMORE, YOUR OWN PROPERTY BURNED DOWN IN WHAT WAS DETERMINED TO BE A GAS EXPLOSION.
YOUR FATHER'S BURNT CORPSE WAS IDENTIFIED PRIOR TO THE BOMBING.
ANSWER ME. WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU INSIDE THAT HOUSE?
OR PERHAPS IT'S YOUR FAULT HE DIED?
IN THAT CASE, HOW DID YOU DO IT?


IF NOT YOU, THEN SPEAK.
DON'T JUST STARE OFF INTO SPACE. WE NEED TO KNOW WHO IS AT FAULT.
TOSS
HERE. TAKE THESE PICTURES OF YOUR FATHER'S CORPSE AND LET ME KNOW WHEN YOU'VE COME TO YOUR SENSES.


DASH!
HOW COLD! ISN'T THAT KIND OF CRUEL?


KABAM
CRUMPLE
DON'T LOOOOK!!

YOU DUMB SHIT!
I DON'T GIVE A SHIT!
SHADDUP!!
IDENTIFY YOURSELF! I AM HERE ON IMPORTANT BUSINESS...


HE CAN'T TALK, FOR FUCK'S SAKE! HAVE SOME PATIENCE, AREN'T YOU A FUCKING ADULT?!!
DO YOU HONESTLY THINK HE'S GONNA MAGICALLY EXPLAIN EVERYTHING TO YOU AFTER THAT?
STEP BACK FOR A SECOND AND REALIZE THAT YOU'RE THROWING TRAUMATIC IMAGES IN A LITTLE KID'S FACE!!
I CAN HEAR... SOMEBODY'S M D...

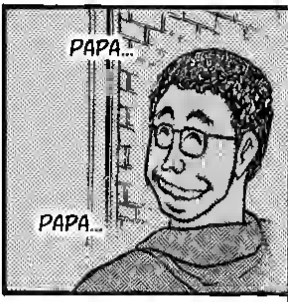
GETTING MAD...?
SHOULD I BE LIKE THAT MAN...?

MAD...?
THAT HURTS, ASS-HOLE!

NO MATTER WHAT...
SO FROM NOW ON...

PAPA...

HELP YOU.
I COULDN'T...


PAPA...
PAPA...

DAMN SOUBOUTEI...
DAMN SOUBOUTEI...

SOU-BOUTEI
MUST BE DESTROYED.